

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 10, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6115

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller IV
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20510-6125

Dear Chairmen Waxman and Rockefeller,

As you complete work on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we write to request the final version of the broadband grant program support any and all technologies that would rapidly deploy broadband to unserved and underserved areas, particularly in rural America.

If the starting point for drafting the conference report language outlining the broadband grant program is the version drafted by the Senate, we believe the definition for an eligible entity should be similar to that which was included in the House version of H.R. 1. Rural America crosses state boundaries all over the country. Should grant applicants not be asked to specifically consider the potential benefits of using satellite technology to meet the goal of deploying broadband to communities that are hardest to serve, we believe they will overlook the national footprint offered by broadband satellite service providers. Moreover, although construction on a satellite can and would be started immediately after funding is received through this bill, it would take more than two years to complete. Therefore, the two-year completion requirement puts an unnecessary limitation on otherwise efficient satellite-based services.

We write in favor of the language in the House bill. As you know, it specifically states satellite technology, along with terrestrial wireless and wire line platforms, would be eligible to participate under programs administered by the Department of Commerce. We believe the conference report should clear the way for all service providers, including those using satellite-based technology, to work with states and use every tool possible to bring high-speed broadband to rural America as quickly as possible.

Please do everything you can to include satellite technology in the broadband grant program in the final version of the bill.

Sincerely,








